Exner Denies She Was JFK-Giancana Courier

San Diego (AP)—The dark-haired woman linked to President John F. Kennedy and Mafia figures stepped out of the world of whispers today to say she and Kennedy had a relationship "of a close, personal nature."

Judith Campbell Exner, after a life of public obscurity, told a packed news conference that Kennedy telephoned her "many times" from the White House.

But the artist, estimated to be in her late 30s, denied that Mafia leader Sam Giancana, who was slain in an unsolved shooting last June in Chicago, had used her to transmit messages to the Kennedy White House in connection with a Central Intelligence Agency plot against Fidel Castro.

There has been public speculation that Mrs. Exner — who was once married to actor William Campbell — may have known of Mafia talks with the Central Intelligence Agency about plans to assassinate the Cuban leader.

"I imagine I probably knew they were part of the underworld," Mrs. Exner said.

Mrs. Exner declined to disclose the extent of her friendship with Kennedy.

Dan Exner, her husband, sat by her side as she read the statement declaring, "I can at this time emphatically state that my relationship with Jack Kennedy did not involve conspiratorial shennanigans of any kind."

"I originally met Jack Kennedy in early February 1960 in Las Vegas," she said. "We were introduced by a mutual friend. I was introduced to Sam Giancana by the same friend at a party in Miami Beach in late 1960."